

# UNIST'OT'EN

CALL TO  
ACTION

2019



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*"Our people's belief is that we are part of the land. The land is not separate from us. The land sustains us. And if we don't take care of her, she won't be able to sustain us, and we as a generation of people will die."*

– Freda Huson, Unist'ot'en Hereditary Spokesperson



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# NINE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE UNIST'OT'EN CHECKPOINT

The RCMP moved Monday to break up a First Nations reoccupation. Here's how we got to this point.

By Zoë Ducklow | 8 Jan 2019 | TheTye.ca



**January 7, 2019:** Heavily armed RCMP arrived at the entrance to Git'dum't'en checkpoint, where unarmed Wet'suwet'en were forced at gunpoint to concede a checkpoint blocking access to fracked gas pipeline through unceded territories.

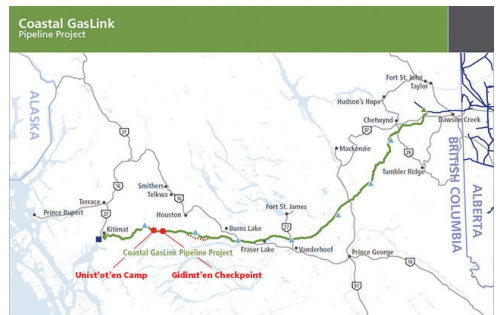
**Photo:**  
Michael Toledano

## 1) WHERE IS THE UNIST'OT'EN CHECKPOINT AND WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

The gated checkpoint is on a forest service road about 120 kilometres southwest of Smithers in Unist'ot'en territory at the Morice River Bridge. Two natural gas pipelines are to cross the bridge to serve LNG terminals in Kitimat. Unist'ot'en is a clan within the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs claim title to the land, based on their pre-Confederation occupation and the fact that they've never signed a treaty.

The gated checkpoint is meant to control access to their traditional territory. A protocol for entry, based on principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, is publicly available. While the first checkpoint was built by the Unist'ot'en clan, all the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have affirmed that their consent is required prior to any development.

TransCanada's Coastal GasLink pipeline will carry natural gas from Dawson Creek to Kitimat. It's in the early construction phase. The proposed Pacific Trail pipeline, run by Chevron, proposes to transport natural gas from Summit Lake to Kitimat for conversion to LNG. This pipeline received an Environmental Assessment certificate, but the investment agreement has yet to be finalized. (The Northern Gateway Pipeline run by Enbridge was also planned to go through the region, but was scrapped in 2016.)



## **2) HASN'T THE UNIST'OT'EN CAMP BEEN AROUND FOR YEARS NOW? WHY IS IT SUDDENLY THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION?**

Yes, the checkpoint was established on April 1, 2009. Since then, annual work camps have added a cabin, healing lodge, pit house and a bunkhouse for visitors. The camp is used year-round for healing retreats, culture camps and living.

Coastal GasLink applied for an injunction in November 2018 because workers have been unable to cross the checkpoint to start clearing the pipeline route. The BC Supreme Court issued a temporary injunction in December, prohibiting anyone from blocking the bridge. The court also ordered the checkpoint to be dismantled within 72 hours.

It's in the news now because not only did Unist'ot'en camp refuse to take down the checkpoint, their neighbouring clan, Gidimt'en, established a second checkpoint. (The injunction was expanded on Jan. 4 to include that checkpoint.)

Throngs of people are travelling to join the camp in solidarity, and on Monday the RCMP mobilized to enforce the injunction. Rallies are planned in over 30 cities around the world today.

## **3) WHO CALLED IN THE RCMP TO RAID THE CAMP?**

The RCMP's job is to enforce the injunction on behalf of the court, and it's not necessarily raiding the camp. On Monday, tactical teams began to dismantle the Gidimt'en checkpoint. Last evening, RCMP reported 14 arrests of people who refused to comply with the court order. The individuals were taken to Houston, B.C.

As of Monday night the RCMP had breached the Gidimt'en blockade but had not reached the Unist'ot'en blockade or camp. The Unist'ot'en camp beside that blockade, which has been in operation for nearly 10 years, is not part of the order, and since it's not in the way of construction access can likely remain as is.

## **4) HOW IS THE B.C. GOVERNMENT, WHICH SUPPORTS THE LNG EXPORT TERMINAL, REACTING TO THE RAID?**

The government has not made an official statement, but Stikine MLA Doug Donaldson, minister of forests, lands, natural resource operations and rural development, visited the Gidimt'en checkpoint Sunday. He arrived with a box of food in hand as a show of support and was admitted into the camp after going through the entry protocol with a Gidimt'en member.

Premier John Horgan is an enthusiastic supporter of the Kitimat LNG project. He has also vowed to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes such principles as free, prior and informed consent for activities on the territories of Indigenous people, the right to not be forcibly removed from traditional land, and the right to maintain connection to the land.

## **5) AREN'T THE WET'SUWET'EN AMONG THE FIRST NATIONS WHO HAVE APPROVED THE PIPELINE?**

It's complicated. The elected chief and council signed the agreement, but the hereditary chiefs are opposed. The 13 hereditary chiefs argue that the elected chief only has jurisdiction over the band's reserves, and that hereditary chiefs retain jurisdiction over the traditional territory where the checkpoint and camps are located.

The band with the elected council who have the reserve is called the Wet'suwet'en First Nation. The hereditary chiefs are leaders of the Wet'suwet'en Nation. The difference has been described like a municipal government versus the federal government. The two governance structures are different and have different jurisdictions. The elected council was established by the federal government when they made reserves. The hereditary chiefs are how the Wet'suwet'en Nation have always governed themselves.



## **6) WHO ARE THE WET'SUWET'EN NATION?**

The Unist'ot'en Clan is one of five clans that make up the Wet'suwet'en Nation. The camp is on their territory and the injunction was initially filed against them, but five hereditary chiefs came to the checkpoint Monday to show their support and solidarity for resisting the pipeline. Wet'suwet'en traditional territory spans 22,000 square kilometres in northwest B.C. west of Smithers.

## **7) HOW ARE FIRST NATIONS LEADERS IN B.C. AND CANADA REACTING?**

Some First Nations leaders support the Coast GasLink pipeline, including a chief from the Skin Tyee band, which is part of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation. Up to 20 First Nations (including the elected council of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation, as noted earlier) have signed agreements with the pipeline. Agreements provide opportunities for work and training on the job.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs released a statement condemning the RCMP's tactics of "intimidation, harassment and ongoing threats of forceful intervention and removal of the Wet'suwet'en land defenders from Wet'suwet'en unceded territory."

## **8) WHAT DO THE PEOPLE AT THE CHECKPOINT FACING ARREST SAY?**

Freda Huson is one of the people named in the injunction. She works at the healing lodge at the Unist'ot'en camp.

"We didn't agree with the injunction because they didn't hear our side, and we have too much to lose. We don't want them to say that we can be in a reservation and stay in my buildings here, but they can destroy the rest of the territory," Huson said in a Facebook video on Monday.

"I'm here now because this is my home, this is where I live. This is an unjust system that we live in. My people have been pushed aside, pushed aside for hundreds of years. And it hasn't stopped, it's still happening right now. My people live off these lands.

"The gate is for our protection. We had racists coming in and shooting rifles, ramming my gate with vehicles, and using explosives to blow up my gate. And the police in Houston know and they did nothing about it. They said not enough evidence.

"And now the state. I blame Justin Trudeau, John Horgan. If you guys are listening to this, you guys are behind this project. You guys are behind approving these police to come in and treat me like a criminal. And all I am doing is living on my lands that my clan has title and rights to. You say reconciliation? This is not reconciliation. You're treating my chiefs and us as criminals. We're not criminals. This is our land."

## **9) WHEN PEOPLE SAY THIS COULD BE 'ANOTHER GUSTAFSEN LAKE' WHAT DO THEY MEAN?**

The Gustafsen Lake Standoff happened in the summer of 1995 in the Secwepemec (Shuswap) region. A Sundance ceremony, which takes a month to complete, was being held when relations with a rancher who claimed ranging rights over the land turned hostile.

The standoff began Aug. 18 and ended Sept. 17. More than 400 RCMP officers, supported by military advisers, blockaded the camp. Landmines were used to block access, police were heavily armed and helicopters and airplanes were used for surveillance. The police operation cost more than \$4.5 million.

No one died in the standoff, although tens of thousands of shots were fired and two people were wounded.

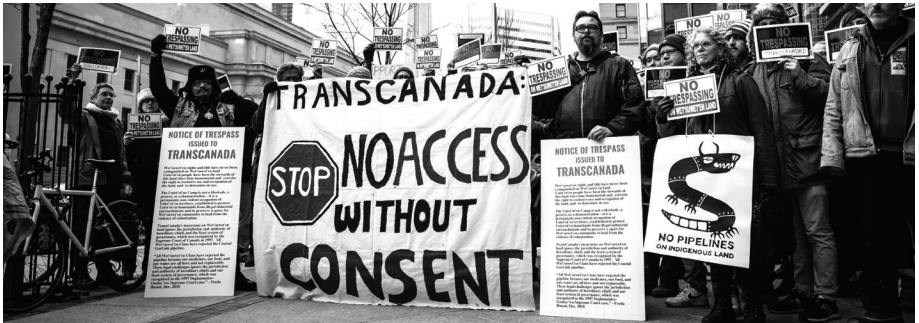
The Sundancers surrendered and 18 people were charged with trespassing. RCMP tactics — including a smear campaign to spread misinformation about the Sundancers — were criticized during the court proceedings. Fifteen people were found guilty, mainly of trespass, and jailed. The fear in this case is that the RCMP will employ similar tactics. Officers have set up an exclusion zone around the area, as they did during Gustafsen Lake.



# AN INJUNCTION AGAINST THE UNIST'OT'EN CAMP: AN EMBODIMENT OF HEALING FACES EVICTION

In so-called Northern British Columbia, the Unist'ot'en House Group of the Wet'suwet'en Nation is facing an injunction application to allow construction of the Coastal Gaslink pipeline through their traditional territory.

By Dr. Karla Tait and Anne Spice | December 12, 2018 | [yellowheadinstitute.org](http://yellowheadinstitute.org)



**The fate of Wedzin Kwa, the site of the Unist'ot'en Healing Centre and the caretakers, will be the litmus test for Aboriginal title in British Columbia and Canada as a whole.**

Coastal Gaslink, under the umbrella of TransCanada, has also launched a civil lawsuit against Freda Huson and Smogelgem (Warner Naziel), in an attempt to pressure the caretakers of Unist'ot'en territory to allow access for the construction of the fracked gas pipeline. The injunction hearing is scheduled for December 13, 2018. If approved and enforced, the injunction would force the pipeline through the territory without the consent of the Dinī ze' and Ts'akē ze' (Hereditary chiefs), who have unanimously rejected Coastal Gaslink's proposal.

The injunction application shows blatant disregard for Anuk Nu'at'en (Wet'suwet'en law) which pre-dates Canadian and provincial law, for the feast system of governance that upholds Anuk Nu'at'en, and for Aboriginal title. Its enforcement would be illegal under both Canadian law and Anuk Nu'at'en. The dispute over the pipeline is, at heart, a struggle over the meaning of Aboriginal title and the rights of Indigenous peoples to determine the use of their unceded, unsundered ancestral territories.

The fate of Wedzin Kwa, the site of the Unist'ot'en Healing Centre and the caretakers, will be the litmus test for Aboriginal title in British Columbia and Canada as a whole.

Wedzin Kwa, translated, describes the area by the river that was re-occupied as a permanent residence of Unist'ot'en by spokesperson and caretaker Freda Huson in 2010. Previously the land had been either occupied and or actively utilized by



the Unist'ot'en to sustain their house group members for generations. The current Chief Knebebas recalls being on the territory with his dad and uncles trapping since adolescence, like his ancestors before him. At that time, they had a cabin at nearby Talbeets Kwa, "where the water flows through the rocks," that was constructed in 1942.

The Unist'ot'en Healing Centre was constructed to fulfill their vision of a culturally-safe healing program, centred on the healing properties of the land. It is the embodiment of self-determined wellness and decolonization, with potential to build up culture-based resiliency of Indigenous people who need support, through re-establishing relationships with land, ancestors and the underlying universal teachings that connect distinct Indigenous communities across the world.

Like most of so-called British Columbia, Unist'ot'en yintah (territory) has never been sold, ceded, or surrendered through treaty. The Unist'ot'en people have a collective right to determine the use of their territory. The feast system that governs Wet'suwet'en people has been in place since time immemorial. Under this system, hereditary chiefs uphold the collective will of the people and are entrusted with responsibility for clan territories. On Unist'ot'en territory, this system has protected the land, water, and animals from environmentally precarious projects like Enbridge. The water in the Wedzin Kwa river is still safe to drink. The Unist'ot'en, with the support of allies, have re-occupied a space of healing and regeneration.

The Unist'ot'en House Group has made a specific effort to protect their land and use it to support future generations. The construction of the Coastal Gaslink pipeline would both interrupt that work and threaten the health and vitality of the land in the future.

**The Unist'ot'en have hosted youth, family and other wellness camps that allow participants, Indigenous and settlers, to connect with the territory. Freda Huson spoke of the responsibility to have a reciprocal relationship with the territory as caretakers:** "We decided to build this healing centre to bring our own people out here and bring healing to them, spiritually, mentally, physically and use this space to make our people strong. Like the residential schools were used to take the Indian out of the child we want to use this facility to put the Indian back in our children, meaning our culture. If our people have our culture they'll be strong, and they'll be able to stand on their own two feet. And we'll have a strong Nation to learn to take care of ourselves and take care of our resources and take care of the land. And if we take care of the land then the land will take care of us."

Traditional medicines and food are commonly gathered for use by camp participants and residents. As the Director of Programming, Dr. Tait supports Indigenous cultural processes that promote healing, privileging Indigenous teachings before western conceptions of wellness; drawing on the evidence-base and theoretical perspectives from western psychology only to the degree that it compliments and aligns with the ancestral knowing implicit in Indigenous lifeways. In doing so Indigenous healing is decolonized. Respectful, responsible hunting has been an opportunity for youth to experience healthy intergenerational relationships, cultural teachings, as well as grow personal esteem and mastery.

**Unist'ot'en House Group has made a specific effort to protect their land and use it to support future generations. Construction of the Coastal Gaslink pipeline would both interrupt that work and threaten the health and vitality of the land in the future.**

**Those with chemical addictions can leave the impoverished (socially, emotionally, spiritually and mentally), painful environments that contribute to addictive behaviors, to join the community at the Unist'ot'en Healing centre and feed their basic human needs in critical ways.**

These offer corrective experiences to begin repairing developmental processes that were gravely disrupted by the legacy of residential schools and the associated harms inflicted on Indigenous family and community systems.

Indigenous peoples carry the pain of genocide, of intergenerational and current traumatic experiences, coupled with inequities in the social determinants of health. The over-representation of Indigenous people with mental health conditions, addictions, incarceration and suicidality indicate that many cannot cope with the heavy burdens of colonization. Land-based programming has also demonstrated value among Wet'suwet'en members working to overcome substance addictions. Their gains are reminiscent of a consensual social experiment that mimics the experimental design of Alexander, Coombs, and Hadaway's (1978) Rat Park studies.<sup>1</sup>

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None have ever attempted to bring in substances during their time at the camp. Smogelgem has remarked that he has seen "spirit in their eyes come to life as they begin to recognize themselves as Wet'suwet'en people again" (Personal communication, July 2018).

**This year marks the 21-year anniversary of the landmark Delgamuukw v. British Columbia decision.** As plaintiffs in the Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa Supreme Court of Canada case, the Hereditary Chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation maintained a strong position — the decision recognized the existence of Aboriginal title as the "right to the land itself." The Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa decision describes Aboriginal title as the right to occupation and exclusive use of the land. This title was not extinguished by attempts at asserting provincial or federal jurisdiction. It was not extinguished by settlement, or the creation of settler governments. It was not extinguished by the Indian Act and band-elected governance structures that are a product of colonization, created to govern the socio-economic activities within the confines of reservations.

Band-elected chief and council are routinely pursued as avenues for consultation by industry and government. Financial duress of meeting the needs of communities with significant health disparities and limited financial resources, put these governments in a precarious position and pressure them to support projects that are beyond their jurisdiction. Although the Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa case considered "limits" to the assertion of Aboriginal title that include infrastructure and settlement projects, the ability of the federal or provincial government to infringe on Aboriginal title is subject to the "ultimate limit that those uses cannot destroy the ability of the land to sustain future generations of aboriginal peoples."

**The impending confrontation, in the event the injunction be approved, is a test case for respecting Aboriginal title and Indigenous governance.**

Coastal Gaslink has already tried a number of tactics in their attempts to delegitimize Wet'suwet'en law. They have signed agreements with elected band





councils, despite the territories in question lying outside the jurisdiction of those governments. They have named Freda Huson and Warner Naziel as individuals in their civil lawsuit, ignoring the authority of the Hereditary chiefs as bearers of the collective will of the nation. They have repeatedly tried to access the territory via helicopter, without the consent of the Unist'ot'en House Group.

**The Unist'ot'en House Group's right to determine the use of their territory, their right to Aboriginal title, includes the right to say "no" to projects that threaten the health and sustainability of their land and people.** There is no access to Unist'ot'en territories without consent of the Hereditary Chiefs who hold stewardship over the lands. No pipelines without consent. The terms of meaningful consultation are not met when companies like Trans Canada and Coastal Gaslink ignore Indigenous governance and law.

These companies are skirting the legitimate and recognized decision makers of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in order to access the territory without consent, and they are likely to leverage the RCMP to enforce their trespass. This must not be tolerated. What part of NO do they not understand?

**The fate of Unist'ot'en's Healing Centre at Wedzin Kwa is important for all Indigenous nations in so-called BC who have an interest in maintaining their traditional governance structures and using them to protect their lands for future generations.** For those concerned about climate change, legally silencing Indigenous environmental strongholds like Unist'ot'en removes another safeguard against oil and gas industrial expansion that our ecosystem and our greater society cannot afford.

We will see, by tomorrow, whether the province of British Columbia, the government of Canada, and the RCMP can abide by their own laws and leave the Unist'ot'en House Group to do their healing work on their unceded territories. Reconciliation is not possible when the Canadian Government and its legitimized centres of power circumvent Indigenous efforts at self-determination and healing from generations of their colonial oppression and genocide. How will the dissonance between practice and ideology exemplified by this case impact the relationships between settler Canadians and Indigenous people?

Pay attention to this case—the health of Indigenous territories and the true meaning of Aboriginal title depend on it.

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#### END NOTES

1 Alexander, B.K., Coombs, R.B., and Hadaway, P.F. (1978). "The effect of housing and gender on morphine self-administration in rats," *Psychopharmacology*, Vol 58, 175–179.

# CALL TO ACTION

What's Next  
in the  
Unist'ot'en  
Battle with  
Industry  
Giants



## JUNE 15



The Unist'ot'en are counting on supporters to mobilize in a big way for the next step in our legal battle. From June 12-14, the BC Supreme Court will rule on the interim injunction. It will either be extended to an interlocutory injunction, giving a pass to more RCMP violence, or dismissed, ending the human rights violations. But regardless of the outcome in the courts, it is not up to colonial government and industry giants to determine our fate. We remain unceded, undefeated, sovereign and victorious.

On January 8th, you took action! You organized rallies and marches. You made solidarity statements. You wrote your representatives. You put on fundraisers and donated to the Legal Fund. You pledged to stand by the Unist'ot'en.

Now, we need you to stand up again, on June 15 regardless of the court outcome. The time is NOW to recognize indigenous sovereignty around the world. It is up to the Wet'suwet'en and our supporters to determine What's Next. ►►► **FOR ACTION STEPS, GO TO PAGE 18.** ►►►

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Unist'ot'en community is not a protest or demonstration. The clan is occupying and using their traditional territory as it has for centuries. This homestead is a peaceful expression of connection to the territory and an example of the continuous use and occupation of Unist'ot'en land.

## FREE PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT PROTOCOL

The Free Prior and Informed Consent protocol used by the Unist'ot'en is a request of permission to enter the lands of the traditional chiefs and matriarchs. Visitors are asked to identify themselves and their relationship to the hosts, as the ancestors did. Like a border crossing, the protocol questions make Unist'ot'en land a safe place. FPIC ensures peace and security on the territory.



# WHAT HAS OCCURRED SINCE THE JANUARY RAIDS?



On January 7, 2019, the world watched in shock and horror as the unarmed Indigenous Wet'suwet'en were illegally forced at gunpoint to concede a checkpoint at the entrance to their unceded territories. TC Energy (TransCanada) plans to push through the "Coastal GasLink" fracked gas pipeline, despite nearly a decade of opposition and lack of consent from Wet'suwet'en/Unist'ot'en hereditary leadership. On January 11, under the threat of continued violence, the Unist'ot'en reached a temporary agreement with the RCMP to allow the removal of their entrance gate. The international community responded with a massive show of support and solidarity for the Wet'suwet'en protecting their land, with nearly 100 simultaneous demonstrations, and hundreds of thousands in donations raised around the world. With the fast paced, global flash-point of actions evolving into a complex and convoluted legal process, many were left wondering: What's Next?

Here is a brief recap of developments on Unist'ot'en territory since January 2019:

**TRAPLINES:** From January 23-25, Coastal GasLink bulldozed through an Unist'ot'en trapline. Elders wept as they surveyed the damage left behind by CGL. The Unist'ot'en House Group of the Gíilseyhu Clandemanded a stop-work order due to the ongoing violations. On March 6, CGL was ordered to cease work on the Unist'ot'en trapline by the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) due to non-compliance with permits. Thus far, CGL has ignored the EAO order and continue to block access, operating bulldozers and excavators within meters of active traps.

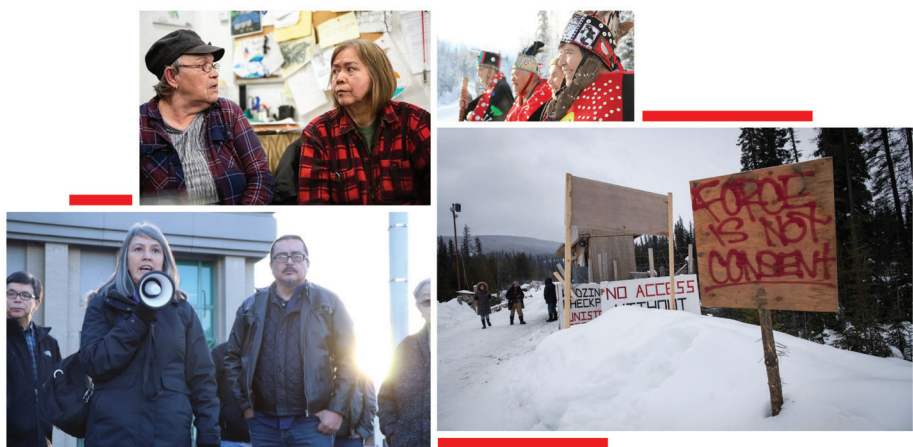
**LITHIC STONE ARTIFACTS:** On February 13th, stone tool artifacts were recovered from the construction Site 9A, a significant archaeological discovery legally obligating CGL to pause work, in order for the site to be assessed. Two days later, the Archaeology Branch and BC Oil and Gas Commission (BCOGC) trespassed on Unist'ot'en Territory to steal these artifacts, and later approved CGL's inadequate mitigation plan with no Wet'suwet'en consultation. The Unist'ot'en House group filed for legal action in the BC Supreme Court on May 8, challenging the BCOGC archaeological mitigation plan prepared by CGL. BCOGC have not been reached for comment at the time of this publication.

**MAN CAMP:** CGL continues to clear and prepare their proposed “Camp 9A” — where the artifacts were found and where Unist’ot’en traplines were bulldozed— to install a man camp. The company has stated their intention to bring in up to 450 workers to occupy unceded Unist’ot’en territory and construct the pipeline. The camp would threaten the safety and security of Wet’suwet’en people and residents of the Healing Center. CGL does not have consent from Hereditary Chiefs to construct a camp on the territory.

**COURT CASE:** On April 16, civil contempt charges against all 14 land defenders from January 7 were dropped, at a Prince George courthouse hearing.

**UNITED NATIONS:** Wet’suwet’en Leaders traveled to New York City on April 24 to appear at the UN Headquarters for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Freda Huson, spokesperson for the Unist’ot’en house group, and Chief Na’moks of the Wet’suwet’en Tsayu Clan, spoke with support from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, condemning Canada for human rights violations.

## WHAT’S HAPPENING NOW WITH THE LEGAL PROCESS?



On the week of June 10, the BC Supreme Court in Prince George will hear Coastal GasLink’s petition for an interlocutory injunction. If they are successful, the interim injunction will be made functionally permanent, allowing CGL to continue with pipeline construction on Unist’ot’en territory without the consent of hereditary chiefs.

The Wet’suwet’en fought for many years in the Delgamuukw-Gisday’wa court case to have their sovereignty recognized and affirmed by Canadian law. In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Wet’suwet’en people, as represented by their hereditary leaders, had not given up rights and title to their 22,000km<sup>2</sup> territory.

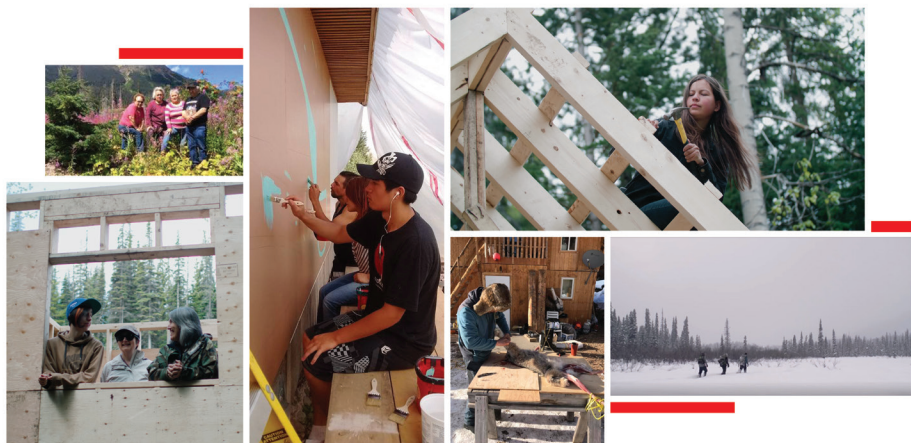
Knowing that further litigation would be prohibitively expensive to Indigenous plaintiffs (and that pipeline construction could be completed before any significant legal issues could be further resolved) TransCanada and the provincial and federal governments are openly violating this landmark ruling. The economic burden and emotional toll this has taken on Freda Huson and



her family has been tremendous. They have had to retain two legal teams to deal with daily violations of Indigenous rights and to prepare a response for the injunction hearing.

The Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan nations have already proven in the Supreme Court of Canada that their Aboriginal rights and title have not been extinguished. It is deeply unjust to force the Wet'suwet'en to prove their right to live on their own territories (again) in a court system built to dispossess Indigenous people. If the injunction continues to be upheld by the courts, it will be in defiance of both Wet'suwet'en law and Canadian legal precedents.

## ARE UNIST'OT'EN STILL PROTECTING THE TERRITORY?



**YES!** Despite ongoing police occupation and intimidation, alongside a legal battle in the courts, the Unist'ot'en continue to use and protect their traditional territory, harvesting medicines, holding land-based healing ceremonies, and building cabins for long term life on their unceded land.

**CABIN PROJECT:** At the 6th Annual Unist'ot'en Spring Construction Camp, a cabin was built on the territory to house long-term Indigenous supporters. One of the long term goals of the camp is to reoccupy our lands – helping our people reconnect with, reclaim, and protect our homelands. With the housing crisis growing on and off reserve, in small communities and urban centers, we cannot ignore the need for our people to have safe, healthy and secure housing.

**HUNTING, GATHERING, CEREMONY:** Controlling access to Unist'ot'en territory has allowed the house group to properly manage hunting on the territory. The moose population was in decline, but has returned to healthy levels through the care and stewardship of Unist'ot'en people. Indigenous people continue to hunt, gather berries and medicines, and hold ceremonies on the territory.

**YOUTH ART CAMP:** Unist'ot'en territory is a place where youth can learn cultural practices and reconnect to the land. This August, Unist'ot'en will host its second northern Indigenous youth art camp. Youth will learn northwest coast art and design, videography, Wet'suwet'en oral history and language. The Unist'ot'en are committed to protecting the land and water for the youth of today and the generations to come.

# WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE HEALING CENTER?



The Unist'ot'en began construction of the Healing Center in 2015 to fulfill their vision of a culturally-safe healing program, centered on the healing properties of the land. Constructed entirely from donated materials and volunteer labor, the building features a full kitchen, dining space, meeting rooms, and lodging for elders and participants. Programming began in 2016 with the first Wet'suwet'en Youth Art Camp, and has expanded to include treatment for addictions, women's groups, cultural workshops, and language schools.

Regardless of the amenities provided by the Healing Center building, the true success of the healing programming depends on connection to, and traditional use of, the land itself. All of Talbits Kwah territory is required for hunting, trapping, gathering medicines, berry picking, and visiting cultural ceremonial sites. Man camps and pipelines threaten all of those rights.

Traditional medicines and food are commonly gathered for use by camp participants and residents. As the Director of Programming, Dr. Tait supports Indigenous cultural processes that promote healing, privileging Indigenous teachings before western conceptions of wellness; drawing on the evidence-base and theoretical perspectives from western psychology only to the degree that it compliments and aligns with the ancestral knowing implicit in Indigenous lifeways. In doing so Indigenous healing is decolonized. Respectful, responsible hunting has been an opportunity for youth to experience healthy intergenerational relationships, cultural teachings, as well as grow personal esteem and mastery.

These offer corrective experiences to begin repairing developmental processes that were gravely disrupted by the legacy of residential schools and the associated harms inflicted on Indigenous family and community systems.

Even during the RCMP raids and threats of violence, and throughout the current militarized occupation, the Healing Center has continued to be a space where life-saving support and services are provided to Wet'suwet'en people. It is the embodiment of self-determined wellness and decolonization.





# HAVE CGL AND THE RCMP CONTINUED VIOLATIONS?



**YES.** The RCMP and TC Energy/TransCanada/CGL have been committing a litany of violations to the agreements made with Wet'suwet'en leadership, and to Indigenous rights. The RCMP, despite their claims of impartiality, have actively enforced CGL's invasion of Unist'ot'en lands. The following are instances of such breaches and falsehoods:

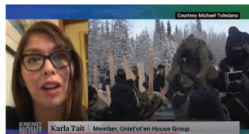
## CGL:

- bulldozed an active trapline, in contravention of the Wildlife Act
- denied access to Indigenous trappers, and called the RCMP when trappers tried to reach the traplines
- blocked Unist'ot'en matriarchs from accessing their own territory for ceremony
- refused to stop work, even when the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) demanded that work cease until they were in compliance with their permits
- continue their plans to occupy Unist'ot'en territory with a man camp, which they do not have consent to do
- continued construction and clearing on the site of their proposed mancamp, even after artifacts were found, using inadequate cultural heritage protections to fast track work over top of Unist'ot'en ancient cultural heritage
- ignored Wet'suwet'en hereditary governance and leadership, beginning construction with NO CONSENT from the chiefs of this territory

## RCMP:

- blocked Unist'ot'en people and Healing Center residents from entering or exiting the backcountry, effectively criminalizing cultural practices such as trapping and ceremony
- escorted the BC Oil and Gas Commission and the Archaeology Branch onto the territory to steal Wet'suwet'en artifacts from an archaeological site
- allows CGL to block off parts of the territory for construction, and show up to enforce the injunction whenever Unist'ot'en people or supporters request access for trapping, hunting, gathering, or ceremony.
- continues to operate a mobile police station on the logging road, in order to surveil, harass, and intimidate people at both Unist'ot'en village and the Gidim't'en access point.
- follows supporters on logging roads and in the nearby town, targeting, towing, and ticketing vehicles without legitimate cause
- has demanded that Wet'suwet'en people and supporters provide identification and personal information without legal pretense or justification
- treats Unist'ot'en people as criminals on their own land, frequently threatens Unist'ot'en people and guests on the land with arrest under a variety of false pretenses and imaginary scenarios

# WHY HAVEN'T WE BEEN HEARING ABOUT ALL OF THIS?



Many journalists and supporters have been hungry for news and information from Wet'suwet'en territories since the violent invasions in January. Corporate control and oil/gas industry funding of major media outlets silences or severely skews the authentic stories from the Unist'ot'en frontline. This leaves independent media and social media as the only purveyors of truth. Due to heightened legal ramifications, everything published is judged very carefully with regards to language and fact-checking. In the past, CGL lawyers have used posts from Facebook as evidence in court against the Unist'ot'en, regardless of context.

The mainstream media has continued to misrepresent Unist'ot'en intentions, picking up industry's lies and reporting them as facts. The daily invasion of CGL and RCMP, as well as routine violations of Indigenous rights, are not seen as "newsworthy" content.

When industry and RCMP act to continue colonial control of territory, they also attempt to maintain colonial control of the narrative. Make no mistake— this story is about Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence in the face of colonial invasion. We are working hard to counter CGL's lies and RCMP's threats. We need networks of critical and like-minded people to help spread awareness, and to make sure our story is told.

For media inquiries, please contact **MEDIA@UNISTOTEN.COM**. (Due to the heavy volume of requests and messages the hosts receive, response may be delayed).

## CREDITS

Writing: Freda Huson, Anne Spice, MJ, Wulf, Andrew

Photos: Micheal Toledano, Carla Lewis



# WHAT'S NEXT IN THE BATTLE AGAINST INDUSTRY GIANTS?



## INJUNCTION COURT DATES:

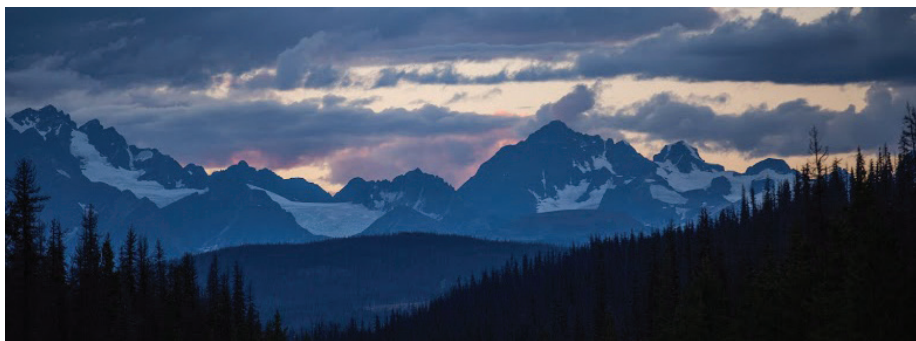
The Unist'ot'en are counting on supporters to mobilize in a big way for the next step in our legal battle. From June 12-14, the BC Supreme Court will rule on whether the injunction will be extended to an interlocutory injunction, or dismissed. Please donate here: <https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/unistoten-camp-legal-fund>

## DAY OF ACTION (JUNE 15):

The global community understands that our struggle is not merely about the pipelines and other infrastructure projects. Without the pipeline threat, Unist'ot'en would still be here, living on our unceded lands. Re-occupation of our lands is based on our sovereignty on our territories. We have never surrendered our ancestral responsibility to gather medicines and berries, to hunt, trap, and fish, to exist as Wet'suwet'en on our territories. We are entitled to freedom of access and jurisdiction over the use of our land. We must be on our land without harassment from CGL and RCMP.

This armed invasion, expensive legal battle, and militarized occupation suggests the Wet'suwet'en again have to prove that this land is ours. This colonial system places the burden of proof that this is our land onto us, instead of on Canada, BC, or industry proving it's theirs. Reconciliation can never occur if Canada only upholds the "rule of law" when it's in their interest.

Now, we need you to stand up again, on June 15 regardless of the court outcome. The time is NOW to recognize indigenous sovereignty around the world. It is up to the Wet'suwet'en and our supporters to determine What's Next.



# ANSWER UNIST'OT'EN CALLS TO ACTION



## COME TO UNIST'OT'EN LAND

The Unist'ot'en are in need of long-term Indigenous supporters (and settler allies) NOW who can be self-sufficient and spend a significant amount of time on the land.\* Useful experience includes: Traditional skills, backcountry hiking, frontline experience, camping, First aid, cooking, childcare, construction skills, using a chainsaw, using a snowmobile, gardening.

Before you come to the territory, you must  
**REGISTER** online at: **UNISTOTEN.CAMP**

\*Basic food and lodging is provided. Camp asks that you cover the cost of your stay. Resources are available for indigenous people if travel costs are a barrier - please make a note of this in your application.

**Code of Conduct:** Respect for people of all races, genders, orientations, nationalities, classes, and abilities. Do not bring alcohol, drugs (including marijuana), or weapons. Nudity is not permitted at the camp. Do not bring dogs. No picking, harvesting, or removal of any plants. No physical touching, photos, video, or audio without consent. The Unist'ot'en make all the decisions on their land, and they may ask you to leave at any time.

**Do you have questions about visiting?**  
**Email: [REGISTRATION@UNISTOTEN.COM](mailto:REGISTRATION@UNISTOTEN.COM)**





## TAKE ACTION WHERE YOU LIVE

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In addition to physically being on the land, support from afar is also required to sustain the camp. Over the years, supporters have educated, hosted events, and donated. Here are ideas of what you can do: \*\*

### EDUCATE

- ▶ Connect Unist'ot'en with major news outlets to broadcast campaigns, or create documentaries
- ▶ Host the Unist'ot'en for speaking engagements at colleges and community centers
- ▶ Provide your home community with presentations about the camp after visiting
- ▶ Subscribe and share posts from social media

### SOLIDARITY EVENTS

- ▶ Create solidarity actions/demonstrations to bring attention to the pipeline financiers and governments
- ▶ Pressure the government - contact your local provincial and federal Ministers
- ▶ Create solidarity statements and pledge support from your local organizations

### DONATE

- ▶ Hold benefit concerts, community dinners, film screenings, parties, art shows, etc. to raise funds
- ▶ Set up fundraising challenges with prizes to promote the campaigns
- ▶ The only legitimate Unist'ot'en fund site is:  
**UNISTOTEN.CAMP/SUPPORT-US/DONATE**

\*\* Please check [unistoten.camp](http://unistoten.camp) for Solidarity Fundraiser Guidelines and read recent legal updates before taking actions



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For more information and ways to support, visit:

# UNISTOTEN.CAMP



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**UNISTOTEN.CAMP**